

## Five arrested in LP car break-ins

## **Burglary of Motor Vehicle**



Taylor Ashton Ellard 08/27/1991



Ivory Junior Whitfield 04/24/1980

## Felony Theft (from Motor Vehicle)



Raul Alfonso Martinez 12/27/1989



Julio Cesar Chapa 01/10/1993



Julio Cesar Martinez 01/10/1994

June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012 By Mike Gunning mike.guning@baytownsun.com

La Porte police investigators cracked a crime wave that plagued the La Porte neighborhoods of Glen Meadows, Brookglen, and Lomax when police were able to identify and arrest five different suspects who targeted motor vehicles last week.

Sergeant John Krueger of the LPPD said the break came when local residents got involved.

"The first series of crimes occurred in La Porte's Glen Meadows subdivision and involved the burglary of eight different vehicles," Krueger said. "The break occurred when LPPD received a tip from a local resident about various stolen items being advertised for sale."

Krueger said investigators initiated an undercover operation in an effort to root out the suspect, by initiating a series of correspondences with the would-be seller. Undercover detectives were quickly able to track down the vendor within a matter of days and, shortly after, obtained an arrest warrant for the suspect, which resulted in 20 year-old Taylor Ashton Ellard of La Porte being arrested on Wednesday under charges of Burglary of a Motor Vehicle.

Just one day after the original filing of Ellard's arrest warrant, residents from La Porte's Brookglen subdivision alerted police of an suspicious person seen walking along residential streets with a flashlight in hand shortly after 3:00 a.m.

"Several LPPD Patrolmen immediately responded to the area and were able to quickly locate the man in the 8500 block of Fairbrook Lane," Krueger said. "After observing wiring and cords protruding from his pockets, police identified the man as 32 year-old Ivory Whitfield of Pasadena. Further investigation reveled that Whitfield was wanted by Harris County Sheriff's Office for an unrelated arrest warrant."

Krueger said as Whitfield was being taken into custody for the outstanding warrants, he was discovered in the possession of several stolen items. Whitfield was soon after linked to as many as four other vehicle burglaries that had occurred earlier that same evening.

On Friday, LPPD responded to a call in one of La Porte's Lomax-area subdivisions, where a resident had observed their neighbor's vehicle tires being stolen from a parked SUV just after 1 a.m. As the vehicle was parked in the 9700 block of Blazing Star drive, three Hispanic males began removing the vehicle's wheels/rims right from the vehicle axles.

Krueger said the officers came upon the thieves while in the act, and 22 year-old Raul Martinez of Pasadena and 19 year-old Julio Cesar Chapa and 18 year-old Julio Cesar Martinez, both of Houston, into custody without incident. The suspects have since been linked to as many as three additional felony theft cases involving vehicles parked among roadways and residences within La Porte's Fairmont Park West subdivision over the past several nights.

Krueger credited the citizens with helping to make the LPPD's job easier, but warned that just because these men are off the streets, the community still needs to remain vigilant against crime. The best way to prevent it, Krueger said, was to follow simple steps of safely deterring motor vehicle theft.

"Park your vehicle in a secure location, studies have shown that vehicles parked in the street have a 120 percent higher chance of becoming burglarized than those in garages. And, while percentages for parking in a driveway are not as high as a garage, vehicles parked in a driveway also have a reduced chance of break-in when compared to those parked curbside."

But don't stop there.

"Lock any unoccupied vehicles," Krueger said. "City-wide, an overwhelming percentage of all reported burglaries repeatedly involve unlocked vehicles."

In fact, since 2012 began, 76 percent of the burglary of motor vehicle events throughout the City of La Porte has involved unlocked vehicles. Not only do unlocked vehicle make easier targets for criminals, but once inside a vehicle, burglars tend to choose small, easy to carry, electronic items which typically do not have serial numbers recorded and can also be sold for a quick profit. GPS units are particularly sought after, but stereo equipment, laptops, cell phones, and loose change are also desirable. Simply recording model and/or serial numbers, and removing any valuables from plain sight, can deter criminals and enable the police to track items.

Krueger said stay involved, and help see the process through. Immediately report suspicious people in and around your neighborhood.

"Reporting suspicious people to the police helps track the movements and patterns of criminals which may also link them to other crimes," Krueger said "In all three of these cases, alert citizens were the catalyst in catching the offenders."